

Ed. miss.

WOMAN'S BOARD OF MISSIONS
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Kindergartens..

... IN ...

..Mission Lands



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KINDERGARTENS IN MISSION LANDS.

“**A**ND Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst” — for an object lesson to those about him. So he has set the little children in the midst of the nations of the earth, and who can tell that it has not been in the thought of God from the very foundation of the world that, in the fullness of his time, these little children should be used as an object lesson by the missionaries, in the midst of dark heathenism, where there is such sin and misery, and oh, such need of love!

From the earliest beginnings of missions, more or less work has been done among the children. It has ever been recognized that through them the mothers and fathers might be reached, but to reach and influence these shy little ones of the Orient, or the wilder child of Africa or the island world, was truly as much a problem as to reach and hold the full-grown children of the heathen nations.

While the missionaries were using heart and head and hand in striving to reach and teach and uplift these people, while the missionary boards were co-operating with them, using all their God-given energies in solving the problem, God was preparing a way in which these multitudes of little children in the

midst should be trained up in Christian living — an object lesson to those about them and a powerful factor in bringing the world to Christ.

Into the heart of a man who must have been a lover of children he put the thought of a garden — a garden of children ; to be cultivated as other and less precious flowers are cultivated, and studied, even as the gardener studies his plants ; “a study of the unfolding of a child’s whole nature, with a view to free self-development and action.”

And this is the kindergarten system of Froebel. “It is not merely artistic and intellectual, but moral and religious also.” From Germany it came to England and America ; in the less than fifty years since the first school was started in Hamburg, the kindergarten has won its way and is now a recognized part of the school systems of the civilized world.

If these gardens of children, this system of child culture, is so necessary and so successful in civilized lands, where children have home training and for the most part are under Christian influences, what would it not do for those in the midst of heathenism ? At work to answer the question were the missionaries toiling in heathen lands, recognizing the vast power of the children in the midst, but ignorant how to develop and use it ; Froebel in Germany laboring to develop and make useful his kindergarten system ; and the Father over all, fulfilling his promise, “I will guide thee with mine eye.”

Has this kindergarten system in heathen lands been helpful to the missionary work ? Can these children in the midst really be used as an object lesson by



ADABAZAR, TURKEY.

which the older people will profit? Can they be made an influence for good in a heathen home?

Let us go in rapid flight over this world of ours, and see for ourselves, while we listen to the testimony of the missionaries as to the influence of the kindergartens on the people. In Mexico and Spain we are in the midst of civilization, and have Romanism, not heathenism, with which to contend. The missionary says:—

“It seems to me the kindergarten is one of the most important branches of our work. We gather in the little children, some coming at the early age of two years. They are almost babies, so they pass naturally to the primary department as they grow older.

“The importance of this work is shown by the strenuous opposition it receives from the Roman Catholic priests. The school was openly denounced by one of them in his church. ‘It is a good one, the best in the city,’ he said, ‘but you must not send your children to learn Protestantism.’”

And yet the children come, and yet the fathers and mothers come to the exhibitions and decorate the walls of their homes with the gifts of their little ones, a constant reminder of the Protestant school and the teachers who have come among them for the love of Christ.

In Japan we are told that “no other form of missionary work seems so adapted to a close friendship with parents,” and “six days of Christian training in each week for the little children will probably count for much toward Christianizing Japan.”

These children in the midst of the Sunrise Kingdom take in the thought of

the presence of God as spontaneously as the flower drinks the dew. One little boy, only four years old, went to his home ; one day his baby sister touched some forbidden article, and the boy said at once, "Mamma said 'No.' "

"Oh, never mind, mamma is n't here," said the nurse.

"Oh, but our heavenly Father is," replied the boy. "He sees if mamma does n't." The nurse told this to the parents, neither of whom was a Christian. They were so impressed with the training their child was getting that they repeated it to the teacher.

In another non-Christian family a little boy was allowed to go to the Christian kindergarten ; he was thought too small to be contaminated. The child stayed to luncheon at the school and got the idea of asking a blessing. He thought that what was right in one place was right in another, and when at tea with his father he said, "Wait, father, till I ask the blessing." And the astonished man put down his saki and waited. Verily, a little child shall lead them.



JAPAN.

From China we hear : —

“ It can hardly be imagined how strange the kindergarten idea is to the Chinese mind. This working together with the same mind and the same movement is just the principle which old China sadly needs to learn for her best physical good and moral development. There can be no doubt in any one’s mind, from the experiments already tried, that the kindergarten is a grand system for China.

“ A child who has been taught in these schools is much more wide awake and childishly happy than his less fortunate neighbor. The parents rejoice in this, and also bear witness that this ‘ queer way of teaching ’ does make the children intelligent, obedient, and courteous.

“ One little fellow only six years old, after being in school a few weeks, would not eat a single meal without asking a blessing, nor go to bed without first kneeling in prayer.

“ From what I know of the Chinese tendency to follow custom unthinkingly and to perform religious acts from which the spirit has long since fled, also from the habit of assenting to the moral axioms of the sages without attempting to live them, I believe that the close union between thought and action taught in the kindergarten will make a great change in this people, and that teachers, full of the spirit of Christ, will see how to help in the development of Christlike characters.

“ Then the influence the kindergarten, with its attendant mothers’ meetings, will have upon the home life ! If you could see these mothers, you would feel how

great an opportunity this work gives us to teach Christian nurture. The fact that we gather the little boys and girls together in this work as we cannot do in the higher grades is also a great benefit; for here we can implant ideas of



SOME CHINESE KINDERGARTNERS.

chivalry. We can see to it that little brother, whose will is apt to be law at home, yields little sister her rights; here where there is no such word as par-

tiality the idea must surely grow that girls are also precious in God's sight. Take the children in our very midst. At first they would pull away each other's things, delighted to complain of one another; now there is less quarreling, more of a disposition to consider the rights of others, development of the imagination, making a better soil for spiritual ideas.

"Then, if I should go deeper and speak of the religious ideas they had got by the 'cram' method. Almost any question would be answered by the talismanic word 'Jerusalem' or 'Jesus.' Now more thinking is done, and we are sometimes helped in our own faith by the answers our questions receive. I only wish that in the beginning of my life in China I could have employed these methods."

From Turkey comes the word, "If kindergartens are desirable in America, they are tenfold more so here." The results are much more obvious in mission lands than in our own country, where the children have so many more advantages outside the school. "The people began to appreciate in one short year the difference between a school which made the little children 'open their eyes and work and think' and the native 'sitting schools,' or private houses where the children are sent to 'sit still' and are often cruelly treated."

Here, as in China and Japan, the parents allow the babies to go to the Christian school, thinking them too young to be influenced. Then when they grow older they insist on remaining. The influence they carry into their homes, and the ease with which the missionaries are thus able to meet the mothers, are especially emphasized. "The mothers are won by the kindergarten as they can



IN TURKEY.

be in no other way ; the children repeat at home the lessons they receive, and thus the entire family is influenced for good. One of the most prominent fruits is seen in the moral and religious development of the little ones ; either directly or indirectly they are brought into almost daily contact with Scripture truths, and the change wrought in the character of the children who have had no religious influences at home is often very marked. Both intellect and conscience are aroused to a new life. The kindergarten brings with it a new era to the people of Turkey. It is an absolute necessity — one of the most important features of the work.

“ During the dark experiences of the past years the children were kept in the school. One little girl was with her parents, and she afterwards came back, having been wounded during a massacre. Her father held her up in front of him, thinking so to prevent the ruffians shooting. They did shoot, however, but desisted when they saw the child was hurt.”

Think of the measure of a father’s love, who could thus hold a little child to shield him from danger !

“ On hearing the guns, some of the little ones began to cry, but one child said, ‘ Don’t cry ; don’t be afraid ; our teachers are here ; nothing can harm us. Jesus is here, let’s pray to him.’ Then they all bowed their heads and said the little prayer the teacher had taught them.”

No wonder the teacher adds, “ Dear babies ! what a lesson of trust they were to us in that trying time ! ”

In India, while they have no regular kindergartens, the Education Department requires a certain amount of kindergarten work and object lessons each week in the schools, and the children are examined in this as in other branches of study. "The whole idea is so new and strange to the Indian mind that it requires great effort on the part of those in charge to keep anything like the true principles of the kindergarten in view." "While the great usefulness of the system is recognized, it is nevertheless unlikely that it will play any important part in education in India, owing in part to the expense and in part to the greater need of other kinds of work."

The child heart is the same the world over, and we find the same delight on the part of the children, and the same good results in their moral, intellectual, and physical development in Africa as in the other mission lands and in America. In one kindergarten forty little Zulu boys and girls were gathered. "It was a wild horde to be under the management of one teacher."



INDIA.

"It would be a grand thing, a most wonderful blessing, could the kindergarten become an established institution in all our missions."

And so the story goes ; from civilized and semi-civilized and wholly heathen peoples comes the same testimony as to the untold value of this work for the little ones. For the children it means peace and happiness and a wonderful fairyland opening before them. It means love instead of hate ; kindness instead of cruelty ; occupation instead of idleness ; good habits instead of bad ones. It means cleanliness, thoughtfulness, politeness outwardly, and inwardly it means the opening of many a child heart to the Saviour's love, and a ready yielding to the guidance of Christian teachers, so that almost unconsciously the seed is sown, deep-rooted in the ready soil of the child mind, to spring up into everlasting life.

Consider these children, in the midst of prejudice and superstition and heathenism, insisting on obedience in a heathen home "because God sees" ; making a heathen father wait while the little one asks a blessing ; refusing to go to bed until they have prayed ; saying in time of peril, "nothing can harm us, for Jesus is here," and kneeling in prayer to him ; carrying to heathen homes the influences of the Christian school ; repeating the lessons learned ; singing the hymns and song ; and giving to father and mother the little results of their work. Who can tell how far-reaching the influence of these little ones may be, as they develop bodily and mentally and spiritually in the safe shelter of these gardens of children ; growing, as did the Holy Child of old, "in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man"?

Statistical Table compiled from replies to questions sent all the Missions.

COUNTRY AND STATIONS. Kindergartens.	Attendance.			Boys or Girls.	Teachers:— Missionaries or Native Helpers.	Cost met by Foreign or Native Agency.	Present Results.	Outlook. Growth probable or desirable?
	Aggregate.	Largest.	Smallest.					
Japan. Kōbe, Kiōtō Maebashi Yanagawa Akashi, Nemuro	250	64	20	Both. More boys.	Miss Howe, and 10 native helpers.	Three supported by Foreign, three by Native Agency.	Improvement in character, disposition. Influence upon parents invaluable.	Yes. Tends to close friend- ship with par- ents; brings children under Christian in- fluences.
* India. Madura Manamadura Arrūpokottai Battalagundu Dindigul Periakulam	300	25	4	Both. More girls.	Missionaries care for the work.	Included in general school expense.	Influence upon the chil- dren has been good.	Not probable, desirable, but not appreciated by people.
China. Foochow Peking Lin Ching	35 26	26 18	10 8	Both.	Missionaries and native teachers.	Foreign support.	Marked im- provement in character and disposition.	Yes. Will prove an im- portant factor in development of China.
Africa. Bailundu Chisamba	80			Both.	Mrs. Fay. Mrs. Currie.	Included in expense of mission.	Good, both in- tellectually and morally.	Yes.
Eastern Turkey. Harpoot Van, Mardin, Erzroom . . .	150			Both. More girls.	Missionaries and native helpers.	Pupils pay.	Marked im- provement. Good influence on family life.	Yes; a very desirable aid to general work.

* These are not regularly organized kindergartens, but the methods of such are employed in teaching the little children.

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Western Turkey.								
Adabazar Bardezag, Brousa Cesarea, Haskeuy Manissa, Marsovan Nicomedia, Scutari Sivas, Smyrna (2) Trebizond Yozgat	594	100	14	Both.	Missionaries and native helpers.	Met wholly or in part by Native Agency.	Great develop- ment in every way. Good influ- ence on fami- lies.	Sure promise of growth. A most im- portant feature of the work.
Central and European Turkey.								
Aintab, Adana (2) Marash, Hadjin Oorfa Monastir, Samokov	130	35	30	Both. More boys.	Native teachers.	Largely self-support- ing.	Improvement work approved by people and some Moslem officials.	Growth as- sured and most desirable if the country be prospered.
Spain.								
San Sebastian	60			Both.	Native teachers.	Supported by the mission.	Development of character. Interest of par- ents.	Promise of growth, but opposition by priests.
Mexico.								
Chihuahua	18			Both.	Miss Dunning.	Private support.	Gain in rever- ence, and thoughtfulness and love.	Very desira- ble and seem- ingly probable.

Training schools for teachers are conducted by Miss Howe, in Kōbe, Japan, and Miss Bartlett, in Smyrna, Turkey. No kindergartens reported from Austria or Micronesia. In Honolulu there is a thorough system for all nationalities, but not connected with our work, though bearing upon it.